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TO PROVIDE AID TO PERSONS IN THE UNITED STATES  
DESIROUS OF MIGRATING TO THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

June 4, 1953

Washington, D. C.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Mr. Barnett. 93.

Senator Langer. You certainly made a very fine statement yesterday. I enjoyed it very, very much.

Who is your next witness?

TESTIMONY OF EARNEST SEVIER COX

Mr. Cox. My name is Ernest Sevier Cox. I give the full name because I have done a good deal of writing for this movement, and always sign it Ernest Sevier Cox. I live at 924 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia. Am I supposed to tell the age, too?

Senator Langer. No, that is not necessary.

You understand that you have all the time you want, and do not hurry yourself, but give us a full and complete statement. We have got all afternoon and all evening.

Mr. Cox. I appreciate very much your making that because I am always a bit nervous thinking that I might take up too much time in a matter like this.

Mr. Chairman, you have mentioned once or twice about the petitions that were in support of this measure, and I have here a recognition that the Greater Liberia bill which these groups have grown out of -- they are all akin, these organizations, and they are, in fact, three in full support of this measure, the Universal Negro Improvement Association with headquarters in Liberia --- you have a letter, I think, from James Stewart, the head of it, in support of this measure, and I here

am commissioned by the Peace Movement of Ethiopia, the Executive Council, to represent them at any time in which they do not have a full representation, in any measure concerning this.

This is the excerpt from Senator Bilbo's speech on April 24, 1939, in the Senate of the United States:

"The most gratifying thing in my life is to be able today to present to the American Congress petitions signed by two and one-half million American Negroes pleading and begging for a physical separation of the races."

Here is a quote from the Vice President:

"The petitions presented by the Senator from Mississippi will be received and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations."

I saw them. The sheets were 50 names to the sheet, and were stacked way up, and then there were two smaller petitions, 2,300,000-odd from the Peace Movement of Ethiopia, and the rest of it was from the other groups, and Senator Bilbo states further that these petitions represented individuals from every state of the Union.

I wish to state here that were Jefferson and Lincoln alive they would give wholehearted and unreserved support to this bill that you have introduced.

Jefferson, throughout his adult life, in 1777, when he introduced in the Virginia General Assembly a measure, a colonizing measure, until the time of his death, is on record many,

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many times in support of aid, giving aid, to the American Negroes and to repatriate their race into their African home-land.

I will read from one statement of Jefferson because it is just two years before his death. It is a letter to George Sparks, and it is found in Jefferson's Works, Volume 7, page 332. It reads as follows:

"The article on the African colonization of people of color to which you invite my attention I have read with great consideration. It is indeed a fine one and will do much good. I learned from it more today than I have before known of the degree of success and promise of that colony. In the disposition of this unfortunate people there are two rational objects to be distinctly kept in view: First, the establishment of a colony on the coast of Africa which may introduce among the aborigines the arts of cultivated life and the blessings of civilization and science. By doing this we may make to them some retribution for the long course of injuries we have been committing on their population. The second object, and the most interesting to us as coming home to our physical and moral character, to our happiness and safety, is to provide an asylum by which we can by degrees send the whole of that population from among us, and establish them under our patronage and our protection as a free and independent people in some country and climate friendly to human life and happiness. I do not

go into all the details of the burdens and benefits of this operation, and who could estimate its blessed effects? I leave this to those who will live to see their accomplishment and to enjoy a beatitude forbidden to my age. But I leave it with this admonition, to rise and be doing."

Jefferson was 78 -- I do not remember how old he was -- it was in 1824 when he wrote this, and he died in 1826.

I stated that President Lincoln, were he alive, would support this measure wholeheartedly. I wish to read from the Emancipation Proclamation:

"I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States and commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy thereof, do hereby proclaim and declare that it is my purpose, upon the meeting of Congress, to again recommend the immediate and gradual abolition of slavery and that the effort to colonize persons of African descent, with their consent, upon this continent or elsewhere, with the previously obtained consent of the government existing there, will be continued."

That is an excerpt from the Emancipation Proclamation.

But nothing in the record, his record, his historical record, would show President Lincoln's interest, human interest in this movement and in these people more so than the time that he called them into the White House -- he brought in quite a group of them, and spoke at great length, and I will give the ending of his speech to the Negroes in the White House.

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Senator Langer. Why don't you put the whole speech in  
the record?

Mr. Cox. I could do that.

Senator Langer. Surely. If you want to put it in, why,  
you have it filed, but read the last part of it anyhow.

Mr. Cox. I have used one of these quotations from  
Lincoln many times: "To cut their own fodder" -- this is a  
White House address:

"Could I get a hundred tolerable intelligent men with  
their wives and children and able to cut their own fodder, so  
to speak, and I have fifty; if I could find twenty-five able-  
bodied men with mixture of women and children, good things in  
family relations, I think I would make a successful commence-  
ment. I want you to let me know whether this can be done or  
not. This is the practical part of my wish to see you. These  
(4) are subjects of very great importance worthy of a month's  
study instead of a speech delivered in an hour. I ask you  
then to consider this seriously not pertaining to yourselves  
merely, not for your race and yourselves at the present time,  
but as one of the things if successfully managed for the good  
of mankind, not confined to the present generation but as from  
age to age descends the light to millions yet to be, until far  
its echoes roll away into eternity."

I want to state that this whole movement of return of the  
Negro to Africa was conceived by a Negro, the initial movement.

12 Paul Cuffe, a free Negro of Massachusetts, grown up to a sea captain, owned ships of his own, and in 1811 he, with a crew of Negro seamen, traveled to Sierra Leone on the West Coast of Africa and made arrangements there to receive immigrants from America.

In 1812, the next year, the war started, the second war between Britain and America, and Cuffe could not continue his work; but in 1817 he carried out a shipload of Negroes to Africa, and it was that year that Cuffe died, and the American Colonization Society was formed to come to the aid of Cuffe and to those others who wished to continue the movement.

It has been my pleasure, my distinction, that since the Negro was made a citizen of the United States, with one exception, I have been closely associated with all the colonization leaders, closely associated. That exception was Bishop Henry Turner. I think I have Turner's statement. His prestige among the members of his race was great during my youth. I did not know him personally, but I did know William P. Pickett, author of "The Negro Problem: Abraham Lincoln's Solution." I have here a communication from Bishop Turner dated January 12, 1907:

"I pray God that you will continue in the great work in which you are engaged and move this country to help the Negro to emigrate to the land of his ancestors. I know all about Africa. I have been from one end of it to the other. I have visited that continent as often as I have fingers on my hand,

and it is one of the richest continents under Heaven in natural resources. This country is not compared to it, and millions of colored people in this country would want to go."

He was a Methodist bishop.

Shortly after Turner had written to Pickett, the letter that I have quoted from, there emerged a man of extraordinary distinction, a great publicist, Marcus Garvey, and Garvey knew how to fan the latent coals of the fire that is in the heart of any race if it wishes to remain a race and have a nation of its own, and at one time they claimed a membership of 6,000,000.

Now, the Garvey organization might be considered the first of the three groups that we are talking about here; and then the Peace Movement of Ethiopia was organized in the early thirties, during the depression, asking President Roosevelt to take steps that would convert the relief funds received by American Negroes into a fund that would aid Negroes to migrate to Africa and take up homesteads in Liberia, and it was that organization that circulated the petition in many parts of America, and got the 2,300,000 names upon it.

I represented the Peace Movement of Ethiopia before the General Assembly of Virginia, and that body memorialized the Congress to assist this movement, and I take note that the words of the memorial were strikingly that of President Lincoln's Message to the Congress. I am not going to go into detail.

Senator Langer. What year was this?

Mr. Cox. In 1936.

In 1938 the movement got into the Congress here for the first time since it was stricken from the hands of Abraham Lincoln. I will be pleased to state, Mr. Chairman, the indirect results of a filibuster on a Civil Rights bill led to the introduction of the Greater Liberia bill.

When Virginia memorialized the Congress, a Northern man, a very rich man, wanted to do something for the movement, and wanted to put some colonization literature before the members of the Congress because the subject had not been discussed for seventy years. This wealthy Northern man selected my book, "White America" for distribution, and Senator Bilbo was reading "White America" on the Floor of the Senate, killing his time in the filibuster, and in "White America" it is stated many times that the only way out of our situation was separation or amalgamation; that between two races who are in contact, that the only solutions that are possible of a race problem would be to mix their bloods or separate the races. As long as they held in contact there will be the race problem, and the only solution was separation or amalgamation.

Senator Bilbo, after spending a day or two killing his time reading the book, stated on the Floor of the Senate that he favored separation. The press reported him, and immediately the Peace Movement of Ethiopia contacted him, and within a very

short while the other groups were in touch with them. That accounts for the introduction of the Greater Liberia bill.

I think it is something that these gentlemen and lady here all would like to know. That is how it got in.

I want to again call attention that all the groups in America, of the Negro groups on colonization, are behind this particular bill, and I want to refer to the value of the United States for this Negro group of our Negroes in West Africa.

I am reading from a manuscript that I am preparing for publication, and will just read excerpts from it:

"The influence of the new nation will extend deep into Negro Africa and will rapidly improve the cultural standards of the native population. It would vitally increase the trade between Africa and America. Such restoration would bind the repatriated Negro to the United States in a spiritual bond that would not be severed, and place this strategic westernmost part of Africa in the possession of a powerful Negro people, grateful to the American people for their sympathy and aid in the Negro's effort to advance his race and the cultural and political power.

"Extending the borders of Liberia, and greatly increasing the present limited African government of wholly Negro people, probably would not be a difficult task. These lands are under the political control of France and Great Britain. Each of these nations took part in severing the Negro from Africa. Each

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of them have possessions in the Western world whose inhabitants are largely of African Negro descent. Negro immigrants from these French and British possessions, aided by their respective nations, would be received in the new nation on terms of equality with immigrants from the United States. The American race problem has been more than 300 years in the making. It can be solved gloriously in a much less period of time by a sustained aid for our Negroes who desire a national home of their own in the land of their ancestors."

The first vessels that were sent to Liberia went out in 1823. The presence in Africa of a nation ruled theoretically by an American corporation, that is, the American Colonization Society, led to certain of the European nations affirming that the status of Liberia was without precedent. This charge led to the American Colonization Society relinquishing its control in 1847. That year the people of the colony formed the Republic of Liberia under a constitution essentially like that of the United States. Its constitution limits citizenship to Negroes. The only part that I took in the Greater Liberia bill, and it was a massive thing -- I was not familiar with that sort of procedure, Mr. Chairman -- was that I had a communication from the distinguished Senator, and he wanted to know how to keep whites out of Liberia, and I told him to make it such American citizens who would be qualified by Liberian citizenship. That would keep the whites out, because if the

.7 whites put a movement there and aided them, like we wished to do these colored people, the whites would take the country.

Senator Langer. Mr. Cox, I am a little bit puzzled. How do you define a Negro?

Mr. Cox. Well, defined in America it is one drop of Negro makes a Negro, so far as the Southern color line is concerned, but they are practical people down there.

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(6) Senator Langer. Just one drop?

Mr. Cox. Well, that is an old statement, one drop of blood makes a Negro. All the Negroes have heard that, all the Southern Negroes have heard that, but to be practical -- it is not practical, it is a theory.

Senator Langer. Under the Constitution of Liberia any person who had a drop of white blood could not become a citizen?

Mr. Cox. They would have to do their own defining, Mr.

Chairman; and the fact that Roberts was an octocean, and the most distinguished of their presidents, was a Virginia octocean, and a very successful businessman over there, would show you that Liberia could handle that end of it all right. He was an octocean, not a mulatto, not one-fourth, just one-eighth.

Senator Langer. Your theory is then that that would be a problem for the Parliament of Liberia, the Congress of Liberia?

Mr. Cox. That would be for Liberia.

Senator Langer. They would take care of that under the screening process.

Mr. Cox. Yes. In fact, some of the mixed breeds in this nation, many of them support this bill. Some of them oppose it, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, they have opposed it. But Mrs. Gordon, M. L. Gordon, is a mixed breed, and so is Bishop Turner. Garvey, the greatest of all of them, and this gentleman here, they are not; they are black folk.

Senator Langer. Upon what theory does the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People oppose this bill? Why do they oppose it?

Mr. Cox. They will not take part in it. I presume they wish to see the other solution -- that is only a presumption. It is either separation or amalgamation in the long run, we know that. These Negroes here know it just as well as I know it, that there is no other way to stop a race problem except to mix the races or separate them.

The National Association opposed Garvey, and took much opposition to him, and he said that they were the ones that caused his indictment, and I have seen a letter from a sub-official stating that they would not support this bill, that they would not support it; but I have not a letter -- I have not seen a statement from the higher officials.

The charge that there was an American corporation founding the nation was pointed out as without precedent. This charge led to the American Colonization Society relinquishing control in 1857. Its constitution limits citizenship to Negroes -- so does Haiti. It prohibits laws which would forbid new immigrants.

The American Colonization Society, through a treaty with the new nation, retained important areas for settlement by American Negroes, and the American Colonization Society is still an existing corporation.

The tactical value to the United States of the Republic of

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Liberia is as an outpost or area of defense and as a halfway station to the war theaters in Europe and the Near East, and was recognized by the American High Command in the second world war.

The United States spent \$5 million in building an air base, and \$18 million in constructing a harbor in that country.

Liberia lies about 1600 miles from Brazil. It is the nearest point in the old world to the new world.

A chief value of Liberia to the Western world lies in the fact that its geographical location in Africa fits it for being a port of entry into the extraordinary wealth in natural resources found in the Western prolongation of the African Continent.

The Republic of Liberia has an area of 43,000 square miles. Its native population is estimated to be approximately two and a half million. It is governed by Negroes of American descent. Its climate is such that while some white men there go without their hats, its wealth in natural resources is very great.

Crops can be raised the year around. A well-known English authority, the late Sir Harry Johnston, and a well-known American authority, the late Dr. Frederick Starr, estimated that Liberia is capable of sustaining 20 million inhabitants. If industrialized as is Belgium, the densest populated nation of Europe, the number living in Liberia could be much greater than 20 million. Belgium has 710 people to the square mile; Liberia has less than 40. If the Liberian population should reach 20 million, there would still be but 465 people to the square mile.

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I think that some of the others should speak, these colored folks, now.

Senator Langer. Mr. Gibbons testified yesterday. Have you some other witnesses here?

#### TESTIMONY OF JAFUS BOYD

Mr. Boyd. Honorable Chairman, members of the assembly, my name is Jafus Boyd. I live at 1627 Webster Avenue, Pittsburgh, 19.

My reason for wanting to go to Liberia is this: First, it would give me an opportunity to work, to help build and develop, and to show the people in Liberia the things that you people have taught us over here since we have been here in America, and that is all our lives, and this is all we know anything about. We feel that when we go to Liberia we would still be at home because the rule, the law and order, are practically the same.

Then we feel like we have a right to ask you to please, sir, support the measure in sending us there. It dates back to the time, from the time that we were brought here. We served in every war that there has been since there has been a black man on American soil.

We fought, and then we served and labored as slaves for 270 years, and I am sure that this afternoon, when we ask you for your support, if you think back over the record, you will find that we have been trustworthy, you will find that we have been humble, and I am sure that you know that we are people who will not betray a trust when it comes to the act of treason, and